

Burgerville Workers Strike for A Fair Contract and a Living Wage

Press

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Today, Burgerville workers across Portland launched the largest strike in the history of the Burgerville Workers Union. Workers from the Convention Center, 92nd and Powell, Hawthorne, and Montavilla Burgerville locations walked off the job this morning, and will remain on strike until they've sufficiently demonstrated their strength to the company.

Workers are striking for a living wage and a fair contract. Corporate's recent wage proposal, which amounts to the legally mandated minimum wage increase a mere six months early, does nothing to change the status quo at Burgerville. We deserve a living wage, and we'll fight tooth and nail until we get it.

We are proud of this strike, and are in awe of the courage displayed by all our coworkers today. But we are disappointed that the struggle at Burgerville has come to this. In the almost year and a half of contract negotiations, we have made a great deal of progress:

from tips and holiday pay to protections for undocumented workers. When it comes to the biggest issue of all, however -- an end to poverty wages at Burgerville -- corporate refuses to budge. Instead, they pay a high-priced anti-union lawyer to disguise and delay at the bargaining table, hoping that the very fact of our poverty compels us to accept in desperation whatever deal corporate offers.

Additionally, striking workers are inspired by the story of Anthony, a longtime Burgerville worker in Vancouver and a father of a one year old daughter who was suspended on Sunday for standing up to his racist and abusive manager. A worker of color, Anthony experienced routine racist harassment from Burgerville management--including being called the "N" word by a manager with a Confederate tattoo. When he approached HR about it, they tried to cover it up. And when he finally confronted his manager about it -- with the Southwest Washington Labor Council backing him up -- he was punished. As of today, Anthony's job remains in jeopardy. Anthony's story reminds us of the petty and retaliatory behavior we have seen from this so called progressive company over and over. It also reminds us what our union is and has always been about--empowering workers to collectively speak up and take action against the various forms of injustice we face at the hands of our bosses.

This strike marks the beginning of a new phase in our struggle. There's no

going back from this. Until Burgerville corporate agrees to a fair deal, there will be no holds barred.

The Burgerville Workers Union will be hosting a number of public actions this week to support of the strikers, and we encourage anyone who cares about fighting poverty in Portland and confronting corporate greed to stand in solidarity with us. Today's action will be a Halloween-themed picket at the Convention Center location at 5:00 PM. More information can be found on our Facebook page.